

DAY ONE

1. From last week's Spiritual Reflection, briefly note one way in which the Gospel of John differs from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark or Luke.

NOTE: Church tradition assumes that John the Apostle was the author of the Gospel of John; however, no matter who the actual author, it was written by someone with apostolic authority such as an eye-witness to the miracles of Christ or one who recorded the words of an eyewitness. For purposes of this study we will refer to the author as "John" and his book as the "Gospel of John."

All biblical references are taken from the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE), copyright USCCB, all rights reserved. The Cornerstone recommends that participants use the NABRE for consistency with the quotations and references within the study questions.

Please remember that the Study is formatted to be completed one day at a time ... we pray it will become a daily habit along with your daily prayer and meditation!

Read John 1:1-11

2a. The Prologue, verses 1-18, of Chapter One presents the themes contained in the Gospel of John. It is worth re-reading and even memorizing. The beautiful description of the Second Person of the Trinity that begins this Gospel is said to have come from an early church hymn. Record verse 1.

b. Genesis 1:1 starts with these same words: "In the beginning..." Why do you think the author might have chosen to begin his gospel in the same manner as the creation story in Genesis?

3a. In the original text, the Greek word "logos" was used for "Word." Ancient Greek philosophers associated Logos (the Word) with the order and design of the universe, or the intelligible expression of the mind of God. (*The Gospel According to John, Ignatius*). John speaks of Jesus as "the Word" in verse 1. What do you think he is implying about Jesus?

NOTE: While Matthew and Luke begin with the Nativity, the Gospel of John begins before the beginning, assuring us that before all else, the WORD existed with God and in God.

b. Verses 1-5 are often called the Introduction. Read them out loud, consider their beauty and then summarize John's description of Jesus, the Word and the Light, from verses 2-4.

4a. Verses 6 and 7 clarify the mission of John the Baptist. Using your own words, why did God send him?

b. What was John the Baptist's relationship to Jesus according to verse 8?

5. In verses 9 and 10 the author states that Jesus Christ, the "True Light," was coming into the world but was already in the world and had made the world. Ironically, the world did not know Him. "The world" could have different meanings. What is one definition that John could have meant?

6. Using your own words, when the "true Light" came into the world, how was He received (verse 11)?

7. CONNECTION: In the creation story in Genesis, God created light that penetrated the darkness. Similarly, in the Gospel of John the "true Light" existed before the world, yet was coming into the world to enlighten "the people who sit in darkness" (Matthew 4:16). We are assured that darkness will not overcome the Light. We sometimes feel a need to be reassured of the promise that darkness will not prevail; that through Jesus Christ good will triumph over evil. How is God's light penetrating the darkness of a difficult time you or someone you know is facing? Share some thoughts with your small group.

Read Luke 1:76-79, which speaks of the mission of John the Baptist and of the coming of the Messiah. Record a phrase or phrases which speak to you of the Light which our Lord Jesus Christ brought into the world, and let these thoughts lead you into prayer.

THINK: The first 18 verses with their lyric form and poetic prose are thought to have been taken from a 1st Century Christian hymn. Ask yourself these questions as you continue this week's lesson: What are some terms (such as "light") that may lead to key concepts in the Gospel of John, and what is Jesus' relationship to the Father and to mankind?

DAY TWO

Read John 1:12-18

8a. In yesterday's lesson we read that many rejected or resisted Jesus, the "Light." Continuing with verse 12 of the Prologue, what happens to those who receive Jesus and believe in His name?

b. According to verse 13, children of God were "born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision." How were they born and of what sacrament does this remind you?

9a. Verse 14 is one of the most powerful verses in scripture. Record it here and take a moment to let these words describing the mystery of the Incarnation speak to your heart. (Good memory verse)

b. God's Word is often thought of as His written word, that is, Holy Scripture. How is the Prologue expanding your view of God's "Word?"

10a. Verse 15 describes John the Baptist as the witness and messenger of Jesus Christ and declares Jesus' existence before and after John the Baptist. According to verse 16, what have we received from His fullness?

b. Look up the word "grace" and record the definition that best describes the graces we receive.

11a. "Grace upon grace" is sometimes translated "gift upon gift", and refers first to the gift of the law given by God through Moses (note "through" not "from") and then to the gift of grace and truth. From whom did this second more important gift come (first part of verse 17)?

b. Pope St. John Paul II taught that in Jesus we see "the human face of God." From the second sentence of verse 18, how does this confirm Jesus' relationship to God the Father?

12. CONNECTION: In this beautiful hymn, we read that the Old Testament is fulfilled in the Son, who has revealed God as Father to us. When we receive Jesus, the Word made flesh, and believe in His name, we become God's precious children and recipients of "grace upon grace." God's gifts cause a compounding of joy in our lives, not because everything goes perfectly, but because His truth and love are constantly reaffirmed. Recall a specific time when it was apparent that you were God's precious child and received "grace upon grace." Share some details with your small group.

Read and record the first sentence of 1 John 3:1. Allow the privilege of being a cherished child of God lead you into prayer.

DAY THREE

Read John 1:19-28

NOTE: Verse 18 ends the Prologue, which includes the main themes of the Gospel of John: life, light, truth, the world, testimony, and the preexistence of Jesus Christ, the incarnate *Logos*, who reveals God the Father. With verse 19 the Gospel of John begins what is often referred to as "The Book of Signs" (1:19 – 12:50). The gospel narrative contains a series of seven "signs"—the gospel's word for the wondrous deeds of Jesus. The Book of Signs is followed by The Book of Glory (13:1-20:31), and the Epilogue (21:1-25). (USCCB)

13a. The Jewish religious authorities from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to question John the Baptist (verses 19-21). What were John's answers to the questions?

Their Questions:

John's Answer:

Who are you?

What then, are you Elijah?

Are you the prophet (meaning one like Moses)?

b. What was John the Baptist doing that would cause the religious authorities in Jerusalem to think it necessary to question John?

14. Record (one of) the prophecies given about each of the persons named in verses 19-21.

The Christ (Isaiah 9:5-6)

Elijah (Malachi 3:23-24)

The Prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:18)

15. John the Baptist did not claim to be the Christ, Elijah or the prophet. When asked again who he was (verse 22), John answered with a reference to Isaiah 40:3, saying "I am 'the voice of one crying out in the desert, "Make straight the way of the Lord.'" What does this mean (verse 23)?

16a. According to verses 24-25, some Pharisees questioned John, finally asking, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet?" How did he respond according to verses 26 and 27?

b. Who is the "One" to whom John the Baptist is referring?

17. Where did this take place and how was it described in verse 28? (Note that the place mentioned is an unknown location east of the Jordan River and is not the Judean village of Bethany near Jerusalem).

18. **CONNECTION:** John the Baptist had a significant following. As he baptized and preached repentance, his reputation spread. Some people thought he was the Messiah. Yet John remained humble, keeping the focus on Jesus, the One to come. Can you think of someone who has humbly yet clearly proclaimed his/her Christian faith with conviction and kept the focus on Jesus when others tried to make him/her the focus? How did this person's humility affect the way his/her message was received? Share some thoughts with your small group.

Read and record Micah 6:8. (Good memory verse) Let this thought lead you into prayer.

DAY FOUR
Read John 1:29-34

19a. As today's lesson begins, "on the next day" John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him. What did he declare in verse 29?

b. The reference to a sacrificial lamb would have been familiar to Jews of Jesus' time (for example, read Exodus 12:21-23 regarding the Passover lamb). Describe what you think John was prophesying about Jesus.

20a. In verse 30 John again directed the people's attention away from himself (echoing verse 15 of the Prologue.) Explain John's reason for saying that Jesus was "the One".

b. In the beginning of verse 31, John stated: "I did not know him." Considering that Jesus was John's cousin, what might he have meant by these words?

21a. At the end of verse 31, John the Baptist finally tells us why he was baptizing. What was his reason?

b. How did John the Baptist know that it was Jesus who was "the One" according to verse 32?

22. Again John the Baptist said, "I did not know Him". Record how he would recognize the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit (verse 33).

23a. In Ezekiel 36:25-27 the time was foretold when the people would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. This is a New Covenant baptism, by which God's people are transformed by the Holy Spirit from within. Select one or two phrases from these prophecies of Ezekiel about this new kind of baptism.

NOTE: Some Old Testament prophets spoke of a new covenant, which would transform us from within. The Old Covenant, the covenant with Moses and the people of Israel at Mt. Sinai, did transform people, but it did so by externally prescribing laws to be followed.

b. In verse 34 John the Baptist makes a bold proclamation about Jesus. What is it?

24. CONNECTION: John testified that Jesus was the Son of God who would baptize with the Holy Spirit, Who transforms us with His gifts. Our Catechism states that Holy Baptism is "the gateway to life in the Spirit." The gifts of the Holy Spirit were set out in one of Isaiah's prophecies about the Messiah (Isaiah 11:2-4). The Catechism lists the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit as wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge piety, and fear of the Lord. Select one of these gifts and meditate on its effect in your life or the life of someone you know. Share some thoughts with your small group.

The Catholic Encyclopedia defines the gifts as follows. Spend a few moments thanking God for these gifts.

- The gift of wisdom, by detaching us from the world, makes us relish and love only the things of heaven.
- The gift of understanding helps us to grasp the truths of religion as far as is necessary.

- The gift of counsel springs from supernatural prudence, and enables us to see and choose correctly what will help most to the glory of God and our own salvation.
- By the gift of fortitude we receive courage to overcome the obstacles and difficulties that arise in the practice of our religious duties.
- The gift of knowledge points out to us the path to follow and the dangers to avoid in order to reach heaven.
- The gift of piety, by inspiring us with a tender and filial confidence in God, makes us joyfully embrace all that pertains to His service.
- Lastly, the gift of fear fills us with a sovereign respect for God, and makes us dread, above all things, to offend Him.

DAY FIVE

Read John 1:35-42

25. As today's lesson begins, "The next day," John the Baptist was with two of his own disciples. As he watched Jesus walk by, he repeated an important statement. According to verse 36, what did he again reveal that led those disciples to leave him?

THINK: In several instances in this chapter and elsewhere in the Gospel, someone will see something important and then say something important about it. This literary device is known as "see and say." Look for the other places "see and say" is used in this chapter.

26a. Scripture does not clarify the reasons the two disciples left John the Baptist. This makes Jesus' question to them even more significant. What was His question, by what title did they call Him, and what did they ask Him in return (verses 37-38)?

b. Jesus' answer to the two disciples is "Come, and you will see." At that, what did the two future apostles do (end of verse 39)?

27. Andrew was one of the two who left John and followed Jesus. According to verses 40-41, who was Andrew's brother and what were the first things Andrew did and said?

28. Look up the word anointed in the dictionary and select and record a definition that best describes Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

29a. In verse 42 Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus. What did Jesus do and say to Simon?

b. In verse 42 Jesus said He would change Simon's name to Cephas, the Aramaic word for Rock. (The name Peter is from the Greek word for "Rock.") A name change in scripture signifies a change in destiny or mission. Read Matthew 16:18-19 and summarize from these verses in what way Simon's mission was about to change.

30. CONNECTION: In today's lesson Jesus called His first three disciples: Andrew, an unnamed disciple (perhaps John the evangelist) and Simon. The first two were disciples of John the Baptist. Through his testimony they found Jesus Who invited them to "Come and see." Andrew then brought Simon to Jesus, who looked into Simon's heart, and said "You will be called Cephas (Rock)". This encounter led Simon (Peter) to follow Jesus. Many Christians have a moment of encounter with Jesus which changes their life mission forever. Others have been faithful since birth. Share some details of your story.

Read and record Matthew 4:19, and begin your prayer today asking for a renewal of spirit in Christ our Lord.

DAY SIX

Read John 1:43-51

31a. Today's lesson again begins on "the next day". According to verse 43, where did Jesus decide to go and who did He next call to be an apostle?

b. Philip was from Bethsaida. Locate Bethsaida on the map provided on page 10. According to this Gospel, what other apostles were from that same city?

32a. Philip found Nathanael (whose name is only mentioned in the Gospel of John, but is probably the "Bartholomew" of Matthew and Acts, per *Ignatius*). What did Philip tell him in verse 45?

b. Nathanael was skeptical and perhaps condescending. He asked, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" From verse 46, what was Philip's answer and how does this relate to Jesus' earlier words of invitation and promise in verse 39?

33. When Jesus saw Nathanael, He said, "Here is a true Israelite. There is no duplicity in him" (verse 47)! Jesus was referring to the Old Testament story of Jacob (later renamed Israel) and Esau. What did Jacob do that was "duplicitous" (Genesis 27:35)?

34a. Nathanael seemed taken aback that Jesus truly knew his heart. He asked Jesus "How do you know me?" With what surprising statement did Jesus respond (verse 48)?

b. Jesus' answer referred to messianic prophecies from the Old Testament. According to verse 49, how do we know that Nathanael's skepticism had turned to faith?

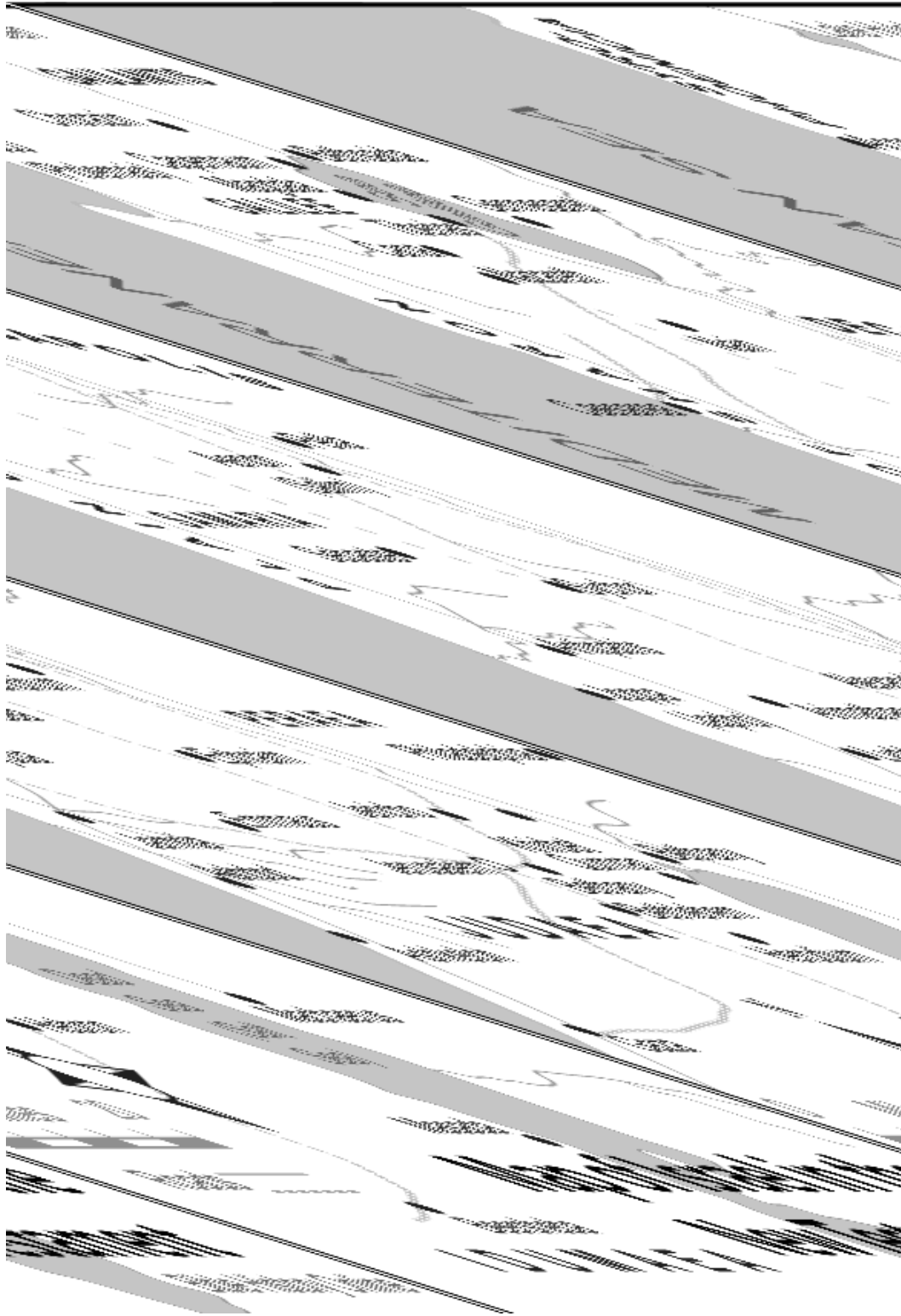
35a. In verse 50 Jesus promised even greater wonders in the future. Alluding to "Jacob's ladder" (Genesis 28:12), what did Jesus promise that the disciples would see (verse 51)?

b. Jesus is called by many names and titles in this lesson. How many can you find and for what reason might John have included so many different descriptions?

36. CONNECTION: Nathanael was skeptical when Philip told him about Jesus. Instead of arguing with Nathanael, Philip simply used the words that Jesus spoke to the first two disciples: "Come and see." Sometimes we, too, are confronted with a comment or question about our faith which can lead us to offer the simple answer, "Come and see." Have you or someone you know invited a friend or acquaintance to experience Mass for the first time or to return to the Church? Perhaps you have been asked questions about your Catholic faith. Share a positive experience with your small group.

Pope Francis encourages us to "look at those first disciples, who immediately after encountering the gaze of Jesus, went forth to proclaim him joyfully." Write a prayer today asking for the confidence to say "Come and see."

Read Lesson 1 John 1:1-51 in the *Meditation and Commentary on the Gospel of John* by Rev. Alfred McBride, O. Praem. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE) © 2010, 1991, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission.



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